



Senators Feinstein, Boxer Urge Agriculture Secretary
To Maintain Ban on Importation of Canadian Beef
January 24, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) are asking newly-confirmed Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns to delay plans to allow Canadian cattle and beef to once again be imported into the United States starting March 7.

The text of the letter sent to Secretary Johanns follows:

January 24, 2005

The Honorable Mike Johanns
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, Rm. 200-A
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

We would like to congratulate you on being confirmed as Secretary of Agriculture. We look forward to working with you on issues of importance to both California and the nation.

Today we write to express our concern over the final rule issued by the Department of Agriculture that will allow the importation of Canadian cattle less than 30 months of age, and beef derived from cattle of all ages as of March 7, 2005. Since the USDA published the final rule on January 4, 2005, two cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) were identified in Canada. Notably, one of these animals was born in March 1998 – eight months after the implementation of Canada's ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban.

We are extremely concerned that USDA does not have a complete understanding of the prevalence of BSE within Canada and that opening our borders to Canadian beef may threaten our food supply. It is our hope that the USDA will delay implementing the final rule until it fully understands the extent of BSE in Canada.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

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